

The year that was...

The winds whistled through the hills as the rains beat down the hillside; children shouted in joy as they got drenched by the water from the sky; happiness unlimited ! That was the first term of this academic year. A new ambience of grace and elegance was evident as children sat for asthachal in their white clothes. With new vigour and vitality we hiked into the surrounding hills, unmindful of the pouring rains. A sense of responsibility and beauty prevailed as the students of art painted the assembly hall with motifs learnt from the folk art of *Mithila*, as adults and students joyfully planned the two-day long cultural programme and exhibition.

Soon came the second term, spectacular sunsets replacing monsoon, cultural milieu of first term giving place to sports day celebrations, cricket camps and study tours. The term also saw the exam going classes involved in their academic work deeply albeit apprehensive expectations. The second term was also a testing time for the community, especially the doctor whose healing touch was put to maximum test. As the temperatures rose, so did the activities of several microbes. The school saw a sudden spurt in cases of chicken pox, herpes, myalgia and flu, as viruses of different kinds began to make their presence felt. Classes were closed after lunch to avoid the intense heat of the afternoon as the community struggled to protect the students as well as the exam going ones from the raging infections.

The school began to hear new chants, telescope came out as Saturn and other stars were gazed at, interest in nature study perked up as Jyotsana akka, Narayan sir, Prabhat sir and Smitha akka joined the teaching staff. Mr. Emmet Kelly from Ireland joined us adding his flavour to the English language teaching and Ms. Liliana Espania, an expert at composting techniques spent 3 months with us adding a Mexican touch to our lives. Naseeruddin Shah spent a day with us.

This newsletter put together by Prabhat sir and his team of class 8 students is our attempt to share with you the variety and richness of experiences, that was life, here, on top of this hill, this year for us.

We welcome feedback and suggestions from you.

Geetha Iyer

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HISTORY WEEK

This term saw quite a number of learning opportunities outside the classroom situations. It was wonderful to be able to have the History Week yet again this academic year. It was planned with due consideration to all the suggestions and ideas put forth after last year's experience.

The week went like this:

Day 1: The theme was 'Wars, Revolutions, People & Places'. The day was heralded as a Traditional day, and Sahyadri saw everyone in a traditional dress. The vivid and wonderful colours of Ghagra-cholis, Kurta-dhotis, varied styles of Saree draping, jewellery and forehead Tikas and lovely bemused smiles made a new morning. The assembly hall was decorated like a Darbar replete with silk awnings, floral garlands, diwans and bolsters draped in bright colours and fabrics. Brass lamps, burning Incense and soft Shehnai music greeted the morning assembly that began with special chants. Pushpi and Tanya



then told of last year's History Week and about how this Week would unfold. The little ones of class 4 presented the 'Shades of India' through the language and dress of different states of our country. The 'Legend of Dhruv' was told by the class 5 kids thro' a small play. Rashi spoke of the 'Evolution of Man' and Varun et al mimed the 'Discovery of Fire'. Abhijit brought us an introduction to the 'Crusades' and then a group of class 9 students, Tejas, Janki, Pratyush, Parth, Snehal and Aksha, held a Panel discussion titled 'Wars: Then & Now' moderated by Rahul Sir. The evening was to view the classic "The Great Dictator" where Charlie Chaplin brings out the absurdity of anti-semitism, wars and conflict and the beauty of love and understanding.

Day 2: The theme was 'In & Around Sahyadri' with a view to explore the stories of Kings, Kingdoms, Forts and Caves in and around these beautiful Sahyadris. Prof. P. K. Ghanekar from Pune presented a slide show on the forts and caves of Sahyadri. Shivneri, Raigad, Sindhudurg, Purandhar, Sinhagad, Junnar Leni, etc. was brought so close to us. The session



was long and had to be cut short. But the questions that followed and the way in which Prof answered them covered a lot more ground in learning and understanding & even allured many of us here to explore the wonders of these heritage sites and the intrigues of this legacy.

The afternoon saw our very exhibition; Coins, Stamps, old objects, Models, Charts and reference Pictures drew crowds of young and old.

The manner in which these little enthusiasts explained their collections and answered questions was endearing. One felt that it was worthwhile making such forays into a different way of learning.

Day 3: 'History in Print' was the theme for this day. Sameera, Khushnaz and Simone spoke about the "Beginnings" of language and writing. They traced the story from the start of Man's settled life. Akanksha and Aksheta then told us of the 'Egyptian Script'. Zenia brought us a book reading based on 'The Shade of Swords' by M.J. Akbar that spoke of Jihad, communal differences and the tenets of Islam. The relevance of these concepts in today's world was also discussed. Sneha then read to us a story she had written about a Creature that ponders over its mission in life and how or wherefrom it emerged. A little fantastic sci-fi type story it was but everyone liked it and some even felt that it could be true! The questions this day dwelled on were like whose story is true? Who writes history? Based on what? Why does one feel like writing a history? How much important is written history? To whom? How does one interpret written works? What is a history text to a school? What should a student of history learn from this theme?



Day 4: 'History Outdoors' is another highlight of this week. The whole school is off to 'see' history. Class 4 took a trip from the Sidheswar temple in Khed to the Old township of Wada. Class 5 went to see the Junnar Leni and they even took in the Shivneri fort in their enthusiasm! Class 6 went to the Sinhagad Fort, class 7 went to see the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum in Pune while the class 8 went to the holy twin sites of Dehu & Alandi. Class 9 went to feast their eyes on the second century Karle-Bhaje Caves. Class 10 went to the recent history lanes housed in the Aga Khan Palace and the not so long ago splendours of Pune's Peshwai in the remains of the Shaniwar wada. With the exception of about half a dozen staff members, all the others went off with some group or the other to enjoy and revisit these repertoires of our past.

Day 5: The theme for this day was the 'History of Science & Art'. Uttara began the day's deliberations by talking about 'Religion'. What it means, what it serves, when it began and why it is what it is were some of the questions she brought in its wake. Stuti & Kshitija told us about the 'Early Chinese Inventions' bringing in queries like why does anyone invent? How does an invention happen? Nikita & Aarya spoke about the 'Industrial Revolution'. Shyam amused us with the history of how "Anaesthetics" were discovered. A panel discussion titled 'Are Discoveries & Inventions a Bane or a Boon' could not happen due to want of time. A slide presentation on the 'Art of Bhaje' was made by a guest speaker, Ms. Renuka Kadpatti.

Geetha Akka concluded the History Week by engaging all of us in reviewing this experience, asking for suggestions, calling attention to the slips and lack of preparation and thanking everyone.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS...

Story of Indian Economy - Uma Shashikant

On January 19th, Mrs Uma Shashikant, a parent of this school, gave a talk in an assembly on the story of the Indian Economy – How India is poised to become an Economic Superpower. She spoke about the state of India's economy in comparison to the economy of other countries. The main intent of her talk was to make the students aware about the reality of our own country's current and future economy. She talked about the direction towards which Indian economy is headed and the golden opportunity we as a young generation of India have of seeing and working for making our country the new economic superpower. She will be a regular visitor to our school and will conduct presentations for the senior students who are studying Economics.

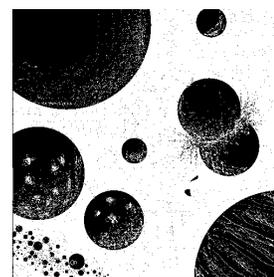


Cancer and Back Pain - Manish Aggarwal

Manish Aggarwal, a parent of the school, gave a talk on Cancer when he visited the school in January 2004. He showed slides of various cases and causes of different kinds of cancer. After the talk there was a question answer session followed by a break. After the break, there was another session on back pain. He spoke to the students about the right postures we should maintain so that our backs receive the least stress possible. Again we ended the session with a question answer session. The sessions brought awareness among the students about their lifestyle and how healthy they are. He also introduced to the students the new technology that is being used to cure these ailments.

One life, One Planet

There is a cosmic unity weaving through all the living and non-living forms on this earth. On February 16th 2004, Dr K V K Nehru, an electrical engineer by profession, gave a talk on this organic unity among all living and non-living forms existing in the cosmos and how all are interdependent on each other. Dr Nehru has been associated with the development of the new theoretical system – Reciprocal System of Theory. Everything is connected and part of the whole – he presented some interesting patterns, for example the increasing levels of consciousness, the hierarchical structure of the world etc. which showed how our continued survival depends on the healthy maintenance of global resources and other bio-communities. The talk assumed critical importance in these modern times when nature is under constant threat due to man's greed and when an



understanding of the principles of nature governing the psycho spiritual realms is an urgent necessity.

Krishnanathji ~ a man from Himalayas

On February 27, Krishnanathji talked to the school in the morning assembly about his experiences in Himalayas. Krishnanathji is one of the Buddhist thinkers who had a long interaction with Krishnamurti during 70s-80s. Earlier in his life he got attracted to Buddhist philosophy and Vipassana meditation. He studied this line of philosophy with Indian and Tibetan teachers. During this time he started his string of Himalayan trips which is continuing even today when he is 70. During his visit, teachers also got a chance to discuss with him on different topics related to education e.g. Awakening of Intelligence and Flowering of Goodness in children.

COMING TOGETHER

Freshers' Programme



The new academic year had just begun. There were a new set of teachers who had joined us, a new set of students. To bridge the acquaintance between the freshers and the oldies we had a freshers' programme on June 21st 2003.

In the programme, all the old teachers and the old students had a programme for the freshers. It was a jolly event and everyone left the Senior Auditorium with a smile on the face.

In Freshers' Programme, we have plays, generally directed by the teachers over here... we have songs... we have fun! Every student looks forward to this big event. Every student remembers it till the day she passes out. After this day, the fear, the worry of the new student evaporates and he knows that Sahyadri School is a family and each new member is welcomed with open arms.



Musical Evenings

On 29th September evening there was a programme where the whole school prepared songs and made their own songs in various languages.

This evening was anchored by Class IX and X. Banerjee family (parents of the school) were the limelight of the show. Mr Banerjee sang many songs with his guitar and Mrs Banerjee sang folk songs. However, they were not the only people performing! Class IV sang a Bangla song

and so did the teachers. Pushpi and Sitara sang a lovely duet. Everyone enjoyed the programme a lot.

In second term we had another similar musical evening on the New Year eve. The music programme continued till midnight and was followed by folk dance for senior students.



School Day

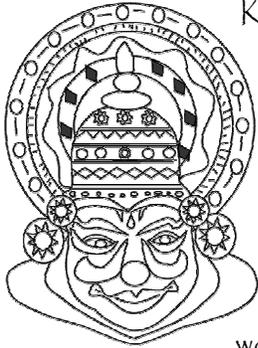
The school b'day was celebrated on 2nd and 3rd September. All the parents and relatives of students came to enjoy this event. All the junior students' parents came on the first day while the senior students' parents came on the second day of the festival. The whole school worked for the success of this multicolored event. We had art exhibitions, displays, plays, songs, dances etc. And to top it all the Dining Hall had prepared special dishes! There was a performance with different kinds of drums by the students, which was appreciated by everyone. Class X presented a set of hilarious plays called Interaction. Class V also presented a cute play based on a folk tale told by Buddhist monks. Class VIII and IX students got their act together to put up a play which brought into picture many dimensions of justice or injustice using various sub-stories in the same play.



THEATRE

Kathakali

Kathakali is one of the oldest theatre forms in the world. A Kathakali group from Kalamandalam, a place famous for Kathakali artists in Kerala, visited the school on January 21st 2004. They performed a dance drama Kiratam based on a story from Mahabharata.



One of the most interesting aspects of the performance was the elaborate make-up of the actors. The dress and the make-up of the characters suited their nature in the performance. The extraordinary costumes and make-up raised the actors above the level of mere mortals and transported us to a world of wonders. The loud and energetic orchestra of the troupe was unique and provided not only the background to the dancing, but also served as a highly expressive special effects team.

Naseeruddin Shah

The well known actor and theatre artist, Naseeruddin Shah, paid a visit to the school in January 2004. He was accompanied by his wife, Mrs Ratna Shah, who herself is a well known actress, and their son Vivan.



Mr Shah had an informal conversation with senior school students about English drama and Shakespeare's plays. He also talked about some misconceptions held by people about performing on a stage. Later in the day, students of Class VII interviewed him about his experiences in theatre and a few other related issues. After that interview, to establish a more friendly, free and informal atmosphere between himself and the students, he played a cricket and a tennis match with a few students.

Mahadevbhai (1892-1942)

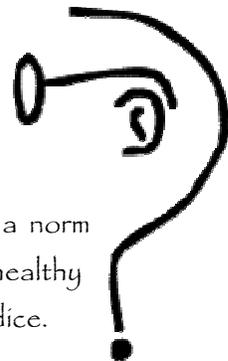
On February 14th 2004, we saw a play Mahadevbhai (1892-1942). The play had its 49th performance in our school. It was a one-person play which attempted to remind the audience of the times that were, and their devotion to truth. Mahadevbhai (1892-1942) is a play written and directed by Ramu Ramanathan. We came to know that Mahadevbhai (Mahadevbhai Desai) was Gandhiji's secretary. Many of us had our doubts of having to go through a boring biography and that too with only one person on stage!

Far from that, everyone was held captive by the way Jaimini Pathak (the actor) narrated the story. It was the story of Indian struggle for freedom, as seen by three consecutive generations. The play was based on the daily diary of Mahadevbhai where he jotted down the innumerable letters to and by Gandhiji, as well as conversations and bantering, lectures and discourses. All

of this made Mahadevbhai a key witness to Gandhiji, besides proving Mahadevbhai's own commitment to Satyagraha and the struggle for independence.

The form chosen was of lively storytelling, interspersed with humour, as Jaimini played out various historical characters like Gandhiji, Mahadevbhai, Nehru, Patel and Ambedkar besides the hilarious Grandfather. It was a performance which asked many serious questions from the younger generation in a lighter vein. The play got a very good response from the students (even some Class IV children sat through the entire play with rapt attention!) and there was a long queue of people outside the Senior Auditorium to express their views in the Comments book.

In an age of increasing communalism and casteism, when violence is becoming a norm rather than an aberration, Mahadevbhai (1892-1942) is a reminder of a healthy tradition that is slowly being obliterated by the devices of deep hatred and prejudice.



Theatre Workshop for Teachers

This 3-day workshop was called a Theatre Workshop though it touched upon a variety of issues. It was conducted by Mr Sunil Shanbag (parent of the school) and Pramod, one of the actors working with him in Mumbai. The workshop allowed the teachers to forget for just one hour that they were teachers – and they had a lot of fun not being teachers! They played many games and after the games many class teacher classes, culture classes and prep classes saw the teachers playing the same games with the children. Through various games and activities, Mr Shanbag led the teachers to an explorative journey within themselves – gently questioning their behaviour inside and outside classrooms. It was almost felt as if they had become children all over again – an extraordinarily joyful and creative experience!!

Learning Hindi is now fun !

This year theatre was used actively as an activity in language, especially in Hindi classes. One of the actors from Mumbai, Pramod, visited the school every month to conduct week long workshops with the children to improve their language skills and evoke interest and motivation in Hindi. The children enjoyed the workshops and were always waiting for the end of the month for Pramod to come. In the first term, he worked with Class VIII children and in the second term, with Class VI and VII. In the farewell programme for Class X, Class VIII students got together to prepare three Hindi plays. Pramod and Mr Sunil Shanbag helped the students and the language teachers in this process. The school is looking forward to using more of these kinds of out-of-classroom approaches for language teaching in the coming years.



MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

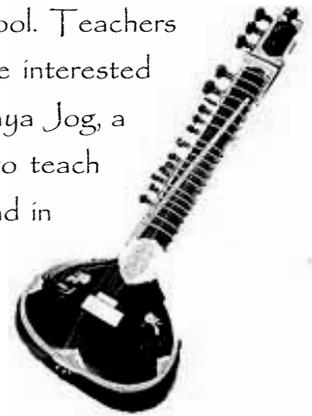
Shehnai - Pramod Gaikwad



Every year many artistes come to the school for musical performances providing the students an opportunity to appreciate some good instrumental music. Pramod Gaikwad, assisted by a violinist, presented a Shehnai recital on July 12th 2003. A shehnai is a wind instrument that is made of a special wood. Shehnai is a compound of two words, which means the king of all wind instruments. It is a traditional instrument which was popularized and raised to heights by Ustaaad Bismillah Khan.

Sitar Concert at Pune

Learning to play musical instruments is a part of hobbies in the school. Teachers from within the school or some who visit the school weekly teach the interested children how to play various instruments like sitar, tabla and others. Jaya Jog, a non-residential teacher, living in Pune, comes to school every week to teach Sitar to children. She is associated with an organization called Naad in Pune. On July 23rd 2003, a few students of Class IX from the school went to Pune to perform in a sitar concert. They went to perform at Naad on the Indian festival of Guru Purnima. The sitar was accompanied by tabla which also was played by the students of the school.



Violin Solo

The second term had started once again, we had many people coming over and performing many things. On December 21st, we had with us, Sanjay Upadhyaya – the same violin player who had accompanied Pramod Gaikwad in the first term!! But this time, he was alone and we had the pleasure of listening to his solo.



HEALTHY MIND IN A HEALTHY BODY

Rock climbing and rappelling

A three-day rock climbing and rappelling workshop was organized for Class VIII. Through this workshop we learnt not only different things concerning rock climbing but we also learnt how to get over our fear!! While rappelling and climbing high rocks courage was required. We were well equipped with safety ropes etc. We also learnt how yoga can play an important role in rock climbing. We learnt different techniques of grip and even used them according to the shape and position of the rocks. The workshop was an experience which can never be forgotten and formed a good base for those who would be interested to pursue it further.



Mallakhamb – the traditional Indian sport

People from Samarth Vyayam Mandir, Pune visited the school in January 2004 and in one morning assembly, they demonstrated before us – Mallakhamb. Mallakhamb is an ancient traditional Indian sport. 'Malla' means gymnast, and 'khamb' means pole. Thus, the name 'Mallakhamb' stands for 'a gymnast's pole'. They showed us two kinds of Mallakhamb:

a) Fixed Mallakhamb: In this, a vertical wooden pole is fixed in the ground. The wood used is usually teakwood or sheeshum, preferred because of its twin characteristics of toughness and smoothness. The wood was 10 to 12 feet high. This apparently simple 'khamb' did not reveal the complexities of the exercises, which required the performer to turn, twist, stretch and balance on the pole. The consummate grace, the agility, dexterity and suppleness of body, combined with quick reflexes, muscle coordination and sense of timing kept us spellbound.



b) Rope Mallakhamb: Here, a cotton rope which is 2.5 cm thick, replaces the wooden pole. The performers are expected to strike various yogic poses, without knotting the



rope in any way. Various Yogic and Gymnastic positions were performed gracefully on the rope Mallakhamb by the performers.

Training for this traditional sport starts from the age of 5 years and requires 1 to 4 hours of daily practice. The artists, who came from Samarth Vyayam Mandir (Pune), were from the age of 7 years to 41 years. They told us that playing on the Mallakhamb helps to develop one's speed, reflexes, concentration and co-ordination. After the assembly got over, there was a long queue of

interested students (some teachers were also there!) who wanted to try themselves on the rope and many of them could actually climb up the rope till the roof of the Senior Auditorium!

Football Camp



The football camp for the students was conducted from 24th July to 7th August 2003. As it was in the first term, rain affected the camp. The camp taught us the basic techniques of football and how to use them in a game. The camp went on quite smoothly except for a few hiccups and dropouts.

Football Match against Bhojwani School

Football, being a common game among children as well as adults, plays an important note in the Sahyadri family. One such occasion of football came on 5th July 2003 with a match against Bhojwani School. Our team, not being very experienced, made many mistakes while playing but after all you learn from your mistakes! Our team cooperation was also not up to the mark. The other team was strong and played a smooth and well-organized game among themselves. Overall considering both teams together the game was rough but yet under control!

Cricket Camp

The cricket camp was conducted by Mr Haq in December in the second term of the last academic calendar. It was one of those camps which generated a lot of enthusiasm among the students. The camp basically taught us the basics of cricket. It was a well organized camp such that during the morning session warm up for the game was done and during the evening session a simple game of cricket was played. The camp came as a great help to improve the cricket techniques. Not only did the campers learn how to play cricket but also learnt about international cricket and team strategies. Every game has a certain discipline and on-field behaviour was taught.



Match against VK Patil School

After the cricket camp the school students put the newly learnt techniques of cricket to practice in a match against VK Patil School. The audience could easily see the spirit in which the game was played. Our team was overexcited and under pressure. These things often result in lousy team tactics. The opponent team was well trained and showed good cooperation among its members. Their bowling skills were tight and could be appreciated. Besides the respective teams' individual performances, the teams played a good game.

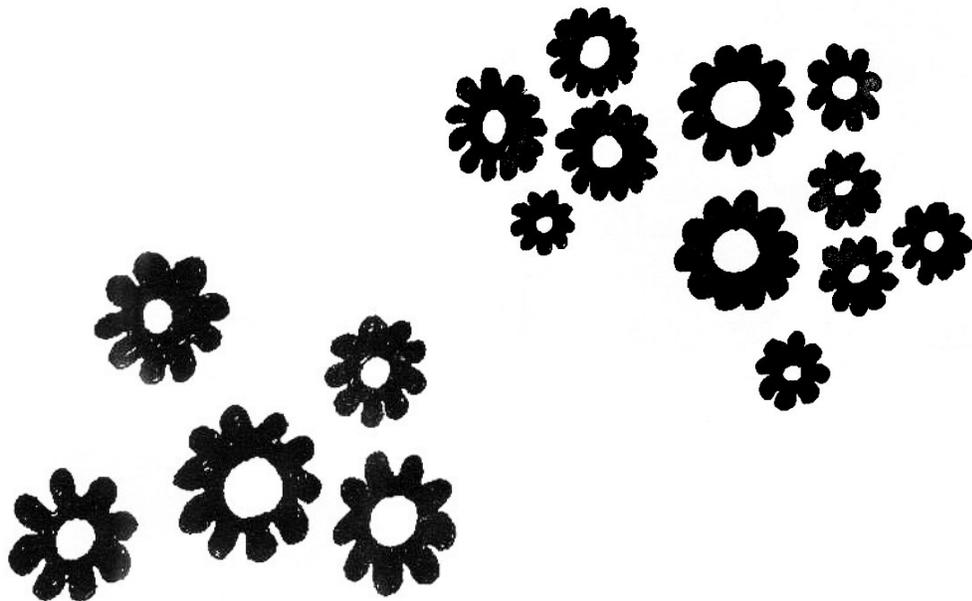
Cross country

The cross country is one of the most waited events before sports day. On Jan 3rd 2004 we had our cross country. This year we saw a lot more participation from various age groups in the event. The event had three levels – Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Level 1, 2 and 3 were 4.5, 7 and 10 km long, respectively. A total of 148 students ran Level 1, 2 or 3. Even one of the pre-school students, Arjun, completed Level 3!



Sports Day

One of the most eventful days in Sahyadri was January 10-11 2004 when the school had its Sports Day. On this day the whole school comes together all colour-coded to participate in various sports events. Everybody is involved in the spirit of sportsmanship. This event brought out the latent physical energy of the school! Teachers, students and dadas participated in several events e.g. runs, throws, jumps etc. Though each event had its winners, everybody enjoyed equally. To add to the sporty atmosphere there was a lot of food and drinks! There were certain events that brought energy and enthusiasm back to the field in the afternoons after a long tiring morning – obstacle races, tug of war etc. These events helped in ending the days in a grand manner with all the vibrant colours on the field as everybody left with a smile.



FILMS AND MEDIA

War and Peace

A prolific and award-winning independent filmmaker, Anand Patwardhan, visited Sahyadri at the beginning of the winter term. Mr Patwardhan has been making socio-political documentaries for nearly three decades pursuing diverse and controversial issues that are at the crux of social and political life in India. He has received numerous awards worldwide. His films have addressed a vast array of issues affecting peace and prosperity within South Asia- nuclear proliferation, communal politics, religious fanaticism, globalization, environmental degradation, and caste oppression – and have served to facilitate further public debate and scrutiny regarding these issues.



During his visit to the school, he showed us his film – War and Peace. The film showed us all the negative effects of a nuclear explosion. It talked about how the government was encouraging nuclear testing to show off their power while hiding its side effects from public eye. The film was based on the nuclear machinations of India and Pakistan contrasted with stories from the survivors of the Nagasaki and Hiroshima nuclear bombings. Many people cried when they saw the deformed children who were affected by the nuclear tests and how the animals and plants near the nuclear power stations or nuclear dumping grounds were badly affected by the nuclear radiations.

The film examined not merely the militarization of India, but analyzes the human cost that is extracted from its citizens in the name of 'National Security.' From the plight of residents living near the nuclear test site, and the horrendous effects of uranium mining on local indigenous populations, it became clear that, contrary to a myth created by the national governments, there is no such thing as the "peaceful Atom."

Class VIII students got a chance to see another of his movies – Narmada Diary – that showed the protests of villagers against building Sardar Sarover Dam over Narmada river. It introduced the Narmada Bachao Andolan (the Save Narmada Movement) which has spearheaded the agitation against the dam. As government resettlement programs proved inadequate, the Narmada Bachao Andolan emerged as one of the most dynamic struggles in India today. With non-violent protests and a determination to drown rather than to leave their homes and land, the people of the Narmada valley have become symbols of a global struggle against unjust development.



Media Workshop...

Mr K P Jayashankar and Mrs Anjali Monteiro conducted the workshop on media awareness for children from Class VII. Both of them have been into this field – teaching media, doing research, making documentaries etc. – for a long time. Jointly they have won ten national and international awards for their videos.

The students worked in groups and participated in various activities e.g. analysis of commercials, with focus on gender; construction of news etc. They enjoyed the activities and discussions during the workshop and felt more aware about the ‘media’ after the workshop. The students also displayed some of the work they had done during the workshop and thus tried to share some of their learning with the rest of the school. As part of the workshop, the whole school watched a film – Naata – made by Jayashankar and Anjali. The film, made in a very interesting way, was based on the lives of people living in the largest ‘slum’ of Asia – Dharavi in Mumbai. Naata juxtaposed the multi-layered narrative on Dharavi and the ‘stories’ of the filmmakers, thereby “attempting to foreground a critical and active viewership.” The film was mainly about Bhau Korde and Waqar Khan, two activists and friends, who have been involved in conflict resolution, working with neighbourhood peace committees in Dharavi. We also had an enriching discussion the next day during the assembly where the children explored the various aspects of the film through a question-answer session.

Film appreciation workshop...



Mr Anil Zankar, who had come last year also, conducted this workshop for Class VIII students. He has made many “art movies”, some of which he also showed to us during the workshop. After this workshop, students have acquired a different way of looking at a film with a critical angle towards it. We also tried figuring out the main ideas behind many films which we saw and we realized that movies are not just entertainment – they carry a certain message which has been generally ignored by the people while watching the films.



EXPLORING SCIENCE

Middle School Science Workshop

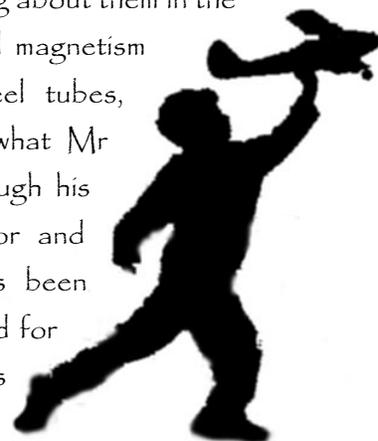
In the first term of the last academic year, Sahyadri School hosted a 4-day workshop for science teachers of all KFI schools in the first week of August. Many noted science educationists and scientists e.g. Arvind Gupta, Erach Barucha (Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune), Avinash Joshi etc. were the resource persons for the workshop. The discussion among the teachers and their interaction with the students generated new and fascinating ideas.



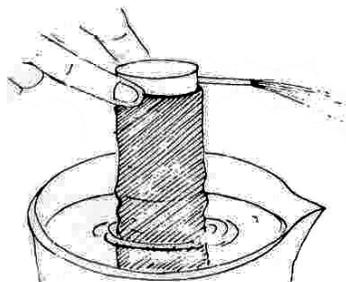
The workshop saw a good participation and altogether this was a very good learning experience for the teachers.

Arvind Gupta – the toy man

Who would not be excited to experience (instead of only reading about them in the text books) laws of motion, pressure and flow, electricity and magnetism through toys made with junk materials like old cycle wheel tubes, photographic film boxes, juice packets, straws etc. This is what Mr Arvind Gupta, a graduate from IIT Kanpur, has done through his efforts to popularize science among children from the poor and underprivileged sections of the society. Arvind Gupta has been honored with several awards including the first National Award for Science Popularization amongst children. His aim behind this is not only to give enjoyment to the children but also to give them a sense of pride for having contributed their bit in helping keep the environment clean.

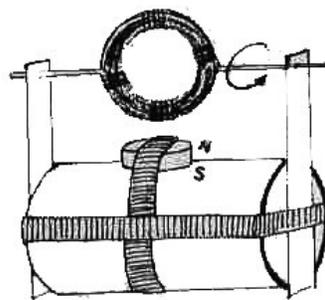


Arvind Gupta has authored/translated over two hundred books, explaining the basic principles of mechanics and pure as well as applied sciences. Himself a presenter of about 70 TV programmes made by the UGC and the CIET on science activities, innovative toys and teaching aids on the national TV, Arvind was also featured as the Green Guru for making educational toys with trash in the popular TV programme called Living on the Edge.



During his three-day stay at the school, he conducted workshops for some junior classes where children learnt various concepts of science by making simple toys with straw, paper, wool etc. Even teachers were found there having fun making whistles out of straws! Arvind Gupta also demonstrated many of his simple scientific toys to all the children of the school in one of the school assemblies. Children were very happy when, once the presentation got over, Geetha akka announced that they could get those books written by

Mr Gupta from the school. He always used to carry his bag full of raw materials – straws, strings, old chappals, tetra packs etc. and was always surrounded by the students – especially the junior ones – teaching them how to make one toy or the other. Arvind Gupta also shared his experiences in science popularization with the science faculty of the school. While discussing with the science faculty of the school, he stressed on the importance of widening the experience base of the students through exposure to different kinds of environments. According to him, that would encourage questioning attitude in the students. His suggestions proved invaluable while designing the excursions and visits for Class VII students during the month of February.



Science Day



We had Science Day towards the end of the second term last year on March 28th 2004. The day started with a surprise. Amresh Sir announced about the science quiz and said that might go beyond the assembly time. Of course, we didn't know at that time that the quiz will continue beyond juice break also. Even Amresh sir didn't know! After the 2 hour long and a very interesting quiz, the students went to get their models and experiments ready for exhibition. Class VII students had prepared charts and models to share some of their experiences and learning from their visits to industries and villages to understand large scale as well as rural technology. Class VIII students had prepared interesting models (one of them even had erupting volcanoes!) to show different kinds and causes of pollution and its effect on us. Some of the models even proposed alternative models for futuristic cities, industries and waste management systems to deal with the problem in a more proactive manner. Even junior classes had prepared interesting experiments for the day and it was fun learning various concepts of science through these. One of the experiments was set up to measure the electromotive force that can be generated by our body depending on the amount of sweat we excrete!



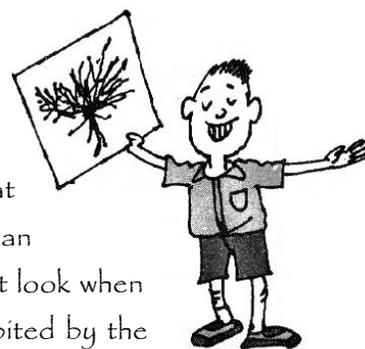
ART AND CRAFT

Madhubani paintings

Shashikala Devi and one of her colleagues had come all the way from Bihar to teach us this art. The art originates from Mithila, a place in North Bihar and Shashikala Devi runs an institute there teaching this art. They get contracts for painting the walls of Cultural Halls etc. With their help, some students of the school also painted the walls of our assembly hall using Madhubani paintings in earth colours. The workshop was mainly meant for Class VIII students who enjoyed this learning experience thoroughly. There were displays of the students' Madhubani paintings put up on the school's Annual Day. The work was very well appreciated by the teachers and the parents who visited the exhibition that day.

Batik workshop...

Batik is a form of art which comes from South India. The Batik workshop was held for Class VIII students and the art students of Class IX and X. Mr C P Mohan, who had also been a teacher at Rishi Valley School for some time, was our teacher. Batik is an interesting art done on cloth. The Art Room acquired a different look when all the Batik pieces were displayed there and the creativity exhibited by the students in this medium was appreciated by other students and teachers alike. The workshop was one of those unique learning experiences where both the students and the teachers were learning at the same time.



Working with Bamboo...

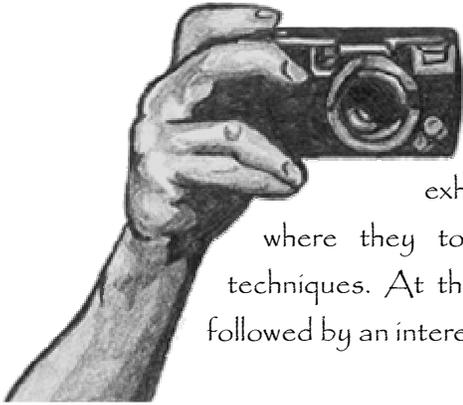
Kanwerjeet sir, who had been doing research on bamboo, held a workshop for Class VI. The children learnt how to make different toys out of bamboo. Familiarity with Kanwerjeet sir also made the learning situation an informal one and children enjoyed working with bamboo.



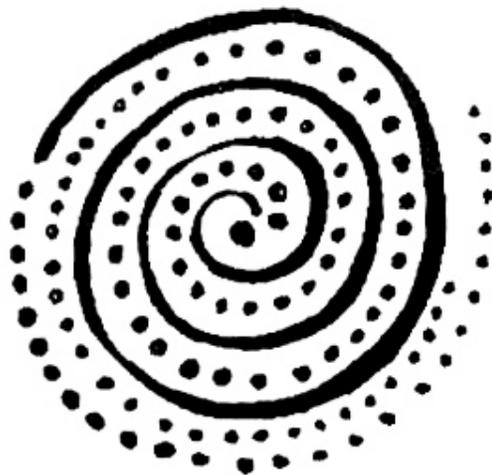
Mask making workshop...

This workshop was held for the Class VII children who loved spending their time making funny, serious, scary, sad, happy and all kinds of masks. The children were exposed to the art of mask-making by Ms Purva who had been making masks for a long time. She also enjoyed making masks with the children and was able to develop an interest in the children in this unique form of art.

Photo Exhibition...



The exhibition consisted of photographs taken by Mr Rohan and Mr Kunal. Both of them are professional photographers who came to the school so that interested children can learn some good techniques of photography. Followed by the exhibition of their photographs, children went for a walk with them where they took photographs to demonstrate some good practices and techniques. At the end of the day, we also saw a slide show by them that was followed by an interesting discussion on the topic.



HIKES AND EXCURSIONS

Freshers' Hike

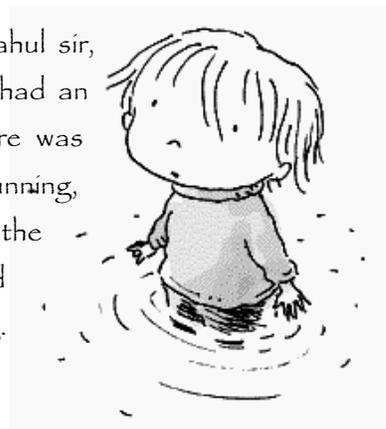


On June 7th 2003, the freshers went to Shambhu Hill for a hike. Salem sir, Purna akka, Anjali akka and Amresh sir accompanied the children. The two school vans took them to the foot of the hill from where they started to climb up the slopes of Shambhu Hill. They divided themselves into three groups and reached the top. They visited the holy shrine on the hill and then spent an hour on the top singing and eating. While coming back, as some of the children

weren't used to such strenuous exercise, they started complaining about their legs aching. Amresh sir took them Piggy back! All the freshers enjoyed the trek and came back with some unforgettable memories.

Junior Dorm Hike

The junior dorm hike was to Kharakwasla dam. Purna akka, Rahul sir, Anjali akka and Mallika akka accompanied the children. They had an interesting bus ride from Sahyadri to Kharakwalsa dam. There was plenty of water all around and soon everyone was in water – running, jumping and splashing! And then they had first watermelon of the season! They were excited, thrilled and full of mud. They sang and shouted and came back fresh and still full of energy in the evening. Such a nice way to beat heat!



Senior Dorm Hike

On June 28th 2003, the senior dorms went for a hike. The students were divided into four groups according to their dorms.

Phalguni boys (Class IX) went to Shigashwar with Sonal akka and Telang sir. For those of you who do not know, Shigashwar is the third highest peak in Maharashtra. Many students felt

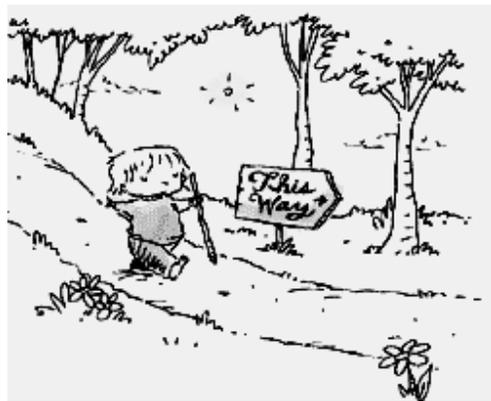
it was too steep and a bit scary, but they enjoyed it a lot.

Torna girls (Class IX, X) went to Kuteswadi and some other neighboring places. Kappu akka and Gopal sir were the teachers who accompanied them. During the trek, they had a high time in the muck as it was raining that day!



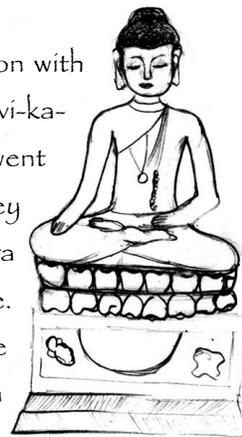
Palash and Kritika (Class VIII) students went to Bhimashankar. Amresh sir, Anjali akka, Amruta akka and Rahul sir went with the children. They had a good time as they got to enjoy the forest and the water. Those who went for the first time had a nice experience and for those who had come before, it was time to refresh some nice memories, collecting new experiences at the same time.

Shravani boys (Class X) went to Gardubi with Geetha akka, Salem sir and Bhanudas dada. They saw the Gardubi temple which is half way to the hill. They had a nice time having a bath under the waterfall. Near the temple half of the people stayed back while the rest decided to go up till the top. The second group had some breathtaking views from the top though a few of them were nearly lost many times. They met some shepherds near the top. When asked what they did when they felt bored, shepherds shared their hobby of collecting crystals with the students. A couple of daring students even walked up to the point where even shepherds don't go. They saw the school from the top and enjoyed the trek immensely.



Class V Excursion

Class V students went to Aurangabad in January 2004 for their excursion with Amruta akka, Gopi sir and Bhanudas dada. On first day they visited Bivi-ka-Maqbara, which is a copy of the Taj Mahal and Panchakki. Next day they went to Ajanta caves. Children went to a cave which had a 'stupa' and they stopped to make some sketches of Buddha. Next day they visited Ellora caves. Children saw Sunset Point, Jyotirlinga Temple and Balaji Temple. Then the group went to visit Daulatabad Fort on the last day of the excursion. All of them had many interesting stories to share with us when they returned to the school.

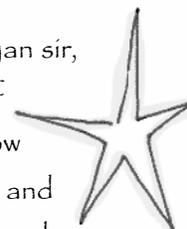


Class VI Hike

With Yashodhara akka, Ghatge sir and Sandhya akka, the children went to Gowardhan and Awasari Ghat on August 23rd 2003. Gowardhan is the place from where our school gets milk. Besides getting to know about the process of making many milk products, they also had a nice time – “tasting” those products! It was an enriching and sweet experience in the true sense! Awasari Ghat was a place where they had fun in the water and it was “too good”. The children also remember an age-old Banyan tree they saw there.

Class VI Day Trip

On February 23rd 2004, Class VI children went to Gargoti museum with Narayan sir, Gopal sir and Usha akka. There they saw some of the rarest stones – some of them found only in and around Pune! It surprised them when they came to know that it was the only mineral museum in Asia. Children saw many lovely stones and minerals. They had an enriching experience and came back with a pride in the mineral wealth of India.



Class VII Excursion



Class VII students, divided into three groups, went to Waynad for their week long excursion in February in the second term of the last academic year. They went to ... Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Waynad (Kerala) where a German person called Wolfgang along with a group of dedicated nature-lovers is “gardening back the biosphere” – carefully cultivating the ecosystem of a piece of land in northern Kerala. Here, the students were able to explore nature in detail, re-establish their connections to it, and consider how they can begin to bring it back into their own lives. A very excited 7th standard told us – “I saw 14 wild and 6 tamed elephants, 7 peacocks, 12 deers, 2 snakes and many new birds.” Children felt the people living in Waynad were very friendly and they lived a very simple life close to nature.

Class IX Excursion

Class IX students went to Auroville for a week long excursion. There they met some communities who called themselves “aspiration”, “solitude” and so on. They also visited two other places in Pondicherry – Chidambaram and Pichavan Mangrove. While coming back, the students also visited The School – the KFI school at Chennai.



TAKING CARE OF SPECIAL NEEDS

Student Counselor - Smitha Dhavle

Smitha Dhavle, the counselor of the school, visited the school for three days in January 2004. She talked with some students individually and she spoke to the students of Class VIII. In future she will continue making frequent visits to the school.

Workshop on Dyslexia for Teachers

Everyone has difficulties in learning, but once it involves your academics, it is considered a problem. This workshop, conducted by Bela Raja on July 28th and 29th 2003, was about how teachers can identify and help students with these learning difficulties.

Bela Raja is a counselor based in Mumbai, who specializes in the area of Specific Learning Difficulties. She is a visiting faculty member in Sahyadri School. She has also been associated with the other schools from the Krishnamurti foundation since 1995 and is now a central resource for the schools. She has worked with The Valley School (KFI) Bangalore for eight years and has set up a Resource Centre within the school where the special needs of children are looked after.

Her work entails an informal assessment of children's learning difficulties and remedial teaching. Bela has been conducting workshops that are geared towards spreading awareness and sensitivity to the special needs of children. This includes training of teachers.

Usually these students with some learning difficulties get very pressurized because they don't know what's wrong with them. But with the help of a teacher sensitive to their needs, they can gain the confidence to do better. Certainly Bela's visits have made Sahyadri a much happier place for many such students!

From the Newsletter Team...

This newsletter has been a modest attempt by us to present before you an account of whatever happened in the past academic year at Sahyadri.



We welcome suggestions and feedback.

Thanks,

Aditi, Arya, Nikita, Prabhat, Prajna, Ria, Sambit, Trisha, Urvashi, Vani